

The Los Angeles-Ventura Funding Area includes three independent Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) planning areas: Greater Los Angeles County (GLAC), Upper Santa Clara River (USCR), and Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County (WCVC). The largest of the three, the GLAC IRWM Region, with 88 cities, has 10.3 million residents representing 26% of California's population and approximately 41% residing in traditionally defined disadvantaged communities. The USCR IRWM Region encompasses one city with a rapidly growing urban population in unincorporated LA County and a total population of 250,000 residents. The WCVC IRWM region includes ten cities with a population of more than 850,000.

### **Known Water Management Needs in Underrepresented Communities**

All three IRWM regions have identified the need for resources to support a more comprehensive assessment and education process as a critical step forward in understanding the water management needs within their underrepresented communities. Water management needs identified through previous studies and surveys for these communities within the Los Angeles-Ventura Funding Area include the following:

- Flood management
- Surface water quality improvements
- Access to clean affordable drinking water
- Access to safe recreational opportunities
- Public safety
- Homelessness
- River ecosystem impacts
- Neglected transportation infrastructure (ex: safe shaded sidewalks, road surfaces)
- Alternative water supplies
- Drought contingency/emergency planning; vulnerability assessments
- Water education and job training

### **Strategies to Address Water Management Needs in Underrepresented Communities Across the Funding Area**

Based on lessons learned from the GLAC DAC Outreach Evaluation Study and the LA County Parks and Recreation Countywide Needs Assessment, the LA-Ventura Funding Area has incorporated the following strategies into the proposed DACIP activities (Task 3) that address the water management needs identified above:

**Local Outreach:** Engagement should occur in precise and small-area communities, as it is there that communities are able to make collective decisions. *Identifying the proper scale of engagement to reach a community is critical and should be part of the analysis before engagement activities begin.* This strategy has been incorporated into the Community Outreach and Needs Assessment Activities.

**Partnering:** The LA-Ventura Funding Area will leverage existing engagement and project planning efforts (ex: IRWM DAC Committees, EWMPs, local urban greening plans, etc.). Building on existing investments in local community initiatives can significantly improve water engagement results. The partnerships are productive, permitting outreach contractors to reach significantly more residents of the community, as well as municipal agency representatives. Partnering also facilitates the most effective form of involvement, community-led engagement. The best messengers for engagement do not always have the subject matter expertise to carry effective messaging forward. *Therefore, partnering organizations together, both traditional and non-traditional water organizations, builds the capacity of local leaders to deliver effective outreach and education.* This strategy has been incorporated into the Community Outreach Activity.

**Local Capacity Building through Technical Assistance:** Underrepresented communities, particularly with smaller municipalities and water retailers, do not have either the resources or the training to assess, develop and prepare for funding opportunities that will move projects forward. When technical assistance can provide mentoring for community organizations, local water agencies and municipalities, all parties benefit from strengthening relationships and skills. *This approach breaks down systemic barriers to access for underserved communities and leads to a higher level of success and sustainability for water projects and regional water policies and objectives.* This strategy has been incorporated into the Project Development Activity.

#### **IRWM Region Involvement or Engagement of DAC Members in Planning Efforts**

In 2016, a DACIP Task Force for the LA-Ventura Funding Area was established to facilitate a consensus-based approach to implement a Funding Area-wide DACIP that meets the objectives of the DWR IRWM Grant Program. While progress has been made with more recent efforts to include diverse representation in IRWM planning efforts through DAC Committee Meetings in all three regions, more needs to be done. LA-Ventura Funding Area participants believe that DACIP resources will enable the IRWM regions to implement strategies identified in such efforts as the GLAC Outreach Study and recommendations from the community outreach efforts in all three regions, providing greater inclusion in future IRWM planning. Below is summary of each IRWMs involvement leading up to the formation of the DACIP Task Force:

- **GLAC** – The GLAC Leadership Committee formed an ad-hoc committee to develop an outreach plan for DACs in 2008. Since that time, underrepresented community involvement occurs most consistently at the sub-region level. Each sub-region holds monthly public meetings that allow underrepresented community members to participate in IRWM plan discussions, project submissions and other issues that come before the GLAC. In addition, DAC subcommittee monthly meetings give agencies, non-profits, and other underrepresented community stakeholders an opportunity to be involved in IRWM planning.

In the fall of 2016, the DAC Committee initiated a series of outreach surveys, meetings, and interviews to help engage underrepresented community members in the development of the LA-Ventura DACIP. Furthermore, Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon organized a DAC Involvement Forum to help prioritize proposed DACIP activities. Over 200 attendees surveyed had identified outreach and education as a top priority followed by technical assistance and site assessment. These priorities have been incorporated into the DACIP Recommended Activities.

- **WVCV** – Building on past efforts to identify DAC areas and needs within the WVCV during development of the IRWM Plan in 2014, the WVCV General Membership met in May 2016 to determine where to focus their future efforts as part of the DACIP grant. The WVCV DAC Committee, was then formed in September 2016 and has met three times. DAC Committee membership is open to anyone interested in serving.
- **USCR** – The USCR DAC Committee was developed during their 2008 IRWMP process and is led by staff from the City of Santa Clarita’s Environmental Services Division and the Castaic Lake Water Agency. A “DAC IRWM Grant Process Strategy Concept” was prepared that included meeting with the City’s Community Services staff to receive initial input on potential projects in the Canyon Country and Newhall areas where it provides DAC programs and support.

### **UNDERREPRESENTED COMMUNITIES IN THE LA-VENTURA FUNDING AREA**

A synopsis of underrepresented communities and designated DAC priority activity areas within each IRWM region are detailed below (also refer to **Map**):

- **GLAC** – includes 105 underrepresented communities as presented in the 2011 DWR GLAC DAC Outreach Evaluation Study.
- **WCVC** – includes areas of Casitas Springs, portions of Oxnard and Ventura, El Rio, Nyeland Acres, Saticoy, Santa Paula, Fillmore, and Piru.
- **USCR** – includes areas of Newhall, Val del Oro/Upstream Newhall Creek, Canyon Country, Bouquet Canyon/Seco Canyon Neighborhood, Lake Hughes/Munz/Elizabeth, Val Verde, and Castaic.

Underrepresented communities not captured by census data include migrant and resident farmworkers, Native American tribal members, and homeless people, many of whom are living in or near our rivers and streams.